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COIN-IMAGERY OF THE SOLDIER-EMPERORS AND THE CREATION OF ROMAN IMPERIAL IMAGERY: APPROACHES AND OBSERVATIONS.

The proposed paper is based on my doctoral thesis in ancient history, “...*achieved nothing worthy of memory:*” *Coinage and authority in the Roman empire c. AD 260-295*,” due to be defended on the 25th of April 2008. My address is:

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The paper will be of 20 minutes length. I think the most suitable panels for my paper would be no. 1, 4 or 5.

Outline of the contents:

A number of portrait-types are characteristic for the coins struck for the so-called soldier-emperors. These portrait-types mainly share an emphasis on the personal *Virtus* and bravery of the emperor. In combination with various motives and legends on the reverses of the coins, the coins featuring such portraits in a sense rather resemble the pictorial programmes which can be found for instance on triumphal arches. I suggest that the images conceived for the coins of the soldier-emperors were adapted to incorporate attributes usually expressed and brought to the public through other, more monumental, media such as triumphal arches. The coin-images could be understood as ‘monuments in miniature:’ a kind of additional propaganda supplanting larger scale expressions of imperial authority.

Why, then, would the repertoire of coin-imagery have been expanded to convey propaganda normally expressed through other media? The incessant warfare of the third century presents a reason. However, Rome had been at war before. Therefore, the reason for the imagery on the coins struck for the later soldier-emperors must be associated with certain developments, characteristic for the Roman empire in the second half of the third century.

One of the most important of these developments is that of regional changes. These changes meant that the “stages” where “images of imperial authority” needed to be presented were rapidly shifting. The coins presented a practical solution to this problem. Further, to a great extent, these coins were struck in newly established provincial mints. This demonstrates how Roman imperial imagery could be *developed* in the provinces. Therefore, the coins struck for the later soldier-emperors can be said to illustrate a phase in the process, through which the city of Rome was deprived of much of its authority, first replaced by the imperial residences of the tetrarchs, and then finally by the city of Constantinople.